AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Withdrawn) A fingerprint authentication system comprising:

a fingerprint registration data section in which pieces of fingerprint data are registered;

a fingerprint read section which reads one fingerprint data;

a fingerprint collation section which inspects whether fingerprint data that matches or almost matches to the fingerprint data read by the fingerprint read section is registered in the fingerprint registration data section; and

a control section which replaces the fingerprint data that is registered in the fingerprint registration data section and that matches or almost matches to the fingerprint data read by the fingerprint read section, with the fingerprint data read by the fingerprint read section if the fingerprint data that matches or almost matches to the fingerprint data read by the fingerprint read section is registered in the fingerprint registration data section.

2. (Currently Amended) A fingerprint authentication system comprising:

a fingerprint registration data section in which pieces of fingerprint data are registered;

a fingerprint read section which reads one fingerprint data;

a fingerprint collation section which inspects whether fingerprint data that matches or almost matches to the fingerprint data read by the fingerprint read section is registered in the fingerprint registration data section; ~~and~~

a control section which registers the fingerprint data read by the fingerprint read section in the fingerprint registration data section additionally to the fingerprint data that is registered in the fingerprint registration data section and that matches or almost matches to the fingerprint data read by the fingerprint read section if the fingerprint data that matches or almost matches to the fingerprint data read by the fingerprint read section is registered in the

fingerprint registration data section; and

deletion means for deleting the fingerprint data having a general similarity that is highest among the pieces of fingerprint data registered in the fingerprint registration data section, from the fingerprint registration section.

3. (Currently Amended) The fingerprint authentication system according to claim 2, ~~further comprising:~~wherein the deletion means ~~for~~ deletes~~ing~~ the fingerprint data having thea general similarity that is highest among the pieces of fingerprint data registered in the fingerprint registration data section, when a number of the fingerprint data registered in the fingerprint registration data section exceeds a predetermined number, ~~from the fingerprint registration data section~~.

4. (Original) The fingerprint authentication system according to claim 3, further comprising:

general similarity calculation means for calculating similarities between each of the pieces of fingerprint data registered in the fingerprint registration data section and the fingerprint data other than the each fingerprint data, respectively, and for calculating the general similarity based on the similarities.

5. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) A fingerprint authentication method comprising:

~~a registration step of~~ registering pieces of fingerprint data in a fingerprint registration data section;

~~a read step of~~ reading one fingerprint data;

~~a fingerprint collation step of~~ inspecting whether fingerprint data that matches or almost matches to the fingerprint data read by the fingerprint read section is registered in the fingerprint registration data section; and

~~a replacement step of~~ replacing the fingerprint data that is registered in the fingerprint

registration data section and that matches or almost matches to the fingerprint data read by the fingerprint read section, with the fingerprint data read by the fingerprint read section if the fingerprint data that matches or almost matches to the fingerprint data read by the fingerprint read section is registered in the fingerprint registration data section.

6. (Currently Amended) A fingerprint authentication method comprising:

~~a registration step of~~ registering pieces of fingerprint data in a fingerprint registration data section;

~~a read step of~~ reading one fingerprint data;

~~a fingerprint collation step of~~ inspecting whether fingerprint data that matches or almost matches to the fingerprint data read by the fingerprint read section is registered in the fingerprint registration data section; ~~and~~

~~an addition step of~~ registering the fingerprint data read by the fingerprint read section in the fingerprint registration data section additionally to the fingerprint data that is registered in the fingerprint registration data section and that matches or almost matches to the fingerprint data read by the fingerprint read section if the fingerprint data that matches or almost matches to the fingerprint data read by the fingerprint read section is registered in the fingerprint registration data section; and

deleting the fingerprint data having a general similarity that is highest among the pieces of fingerprint data registered in the fingerprint registration data section, from the fingerprint registration data section.

7. (Currently Amended) The fingerprint authentication method according to claim 6, ~~further comprising:~~

~~A deletion step of~~wherein deleting occurs when a number of the number of the fingerprint data registered in the fingerprint registration data section exceeds a predetermined number. ~~deleting the fingerprint data having a general similarity that is highest among the~~

~~pieces of fingerprint data registered in the fingerprint registration data section, from the fingerprint registration data section~~.

8. (Currently Amended) The fingerprint authentication method according to claim 7, further comprising:

~~general similarity calculation step of~~ calculating similarities between each of the pieces of fingerprint data registered in the fingerprint registration data section and the fingerprint data other than the each fingerprint data, respectively, and for calculating the general similarity based on the similarities.

9. (New) The fingerprint authentication system according to claim 4, wherein the general similarity is calculated based on a sum of a predetermined number of similarities of each fingerprint data.

10. (New) The fingerprint authentication system according to claim 4, wherein the general similarity is calculated based on a mean square of a predetermined number of similarities of each fingerprint data.

11. (New) The fingerprint authentication system according to claim 9, wherein the predetermined number of similarities of each fingerprint data is determined by calculating the similarity between two of a predetermined pieces plus one of registered fingerprint data for all combinations of a selection of two pieces of data from the predetermined pieces plus one pieces of data.

12. (New) The fingerprint authentication system according to claim 1, wherein the control section replaces the fingerprint data that is registered in the fingerprint registration data section in accordance to growth of the fingerprint data.

13. (New) The fingerprint authentication according to claim 2, wherein the control section registers the fingerprint data read by the fingerprint read section in the fingerprint registration data section additionally to the fingerprint data that is registered in the fingerprint registration data section and that matches or almost matches to the fingerprint data read by the fingerprint read section in accordance with seasonal variation on the fingerprint data.

14. (New) The fingerprint authentication method according to claim 8, wherein the general similarity is calculated based on a sum of a predetermined number of similarities of each fingerprint data.

15. (New) The fingerprint authentication method according to claim 8, wherein the general similarity is calculated based on a mean square of a predetermined number of similarities of each fingerprint data.

16. (New) The fingerprint authentication system according to claim 14, wherein the predetermined number of similarities of each fingerprint data is determined by calculating the similarity between two of a predetermined pieces plus one of registered fingerprint data for all combinations of a selection of two pieces of data from the predetermined pieces plus one pieces of data.

17. (New) The fingerprint authentication system according to claim 5, wherein replacing the fingerprint data that is registered in the fingerprint registration data section occurs in accordance to growth of the fingerprint data.

18. (New) The fingerprint authentication according to claim 6, wherein registering the fingerprint data read by the fingerprint read section in the fingerprint registration data section additionally to the fingerprint data that is registered in the fingerprint registration data section and that matches or almost matches to the fingerprint data read by the fingerprint read section occurs in accordance with seasonal variation on the fingerprint data.